Lambda Letters Project

#34216

Vol. 12, No. 3 March, 2004 www.lambdaletters.org LambdaLP@aol.com (916) 728-1261

Welcome to the New Us!

By Lori Norman, LLP Chair

The Lambda Letters Project is pleased to introduce you to the new us! It seems like a great time to show off our new look—what with spring in the air and the rebirth of all things new. Let's face it: We all like to show off when we think we look our best!

We owe our new logo to Crystal Weber of Studio C, a design and communications firm in Sacramento. Studio C took the time to understand what we're all about and what we've accomplished. They were so impressed with the work we do that they offered to provide their design services pro bono.

We got far more than we bargained for! Studio C has developed a comprehensive identity that provides us with a uniquely recognizable brand—which we hope to use to your benefit. Their logo captures the essence of who we are (Lambda Letters) with what we do (letter writing). It shows two *L*s turned on their sides, creating an envelope.

Studio C has been successful in elevating many brands, such as Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, W.G. Grinders, California Division of Tourism, Planned Parenthood, and the NAACP.

Because the success of this project is due to a collaborative effort, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our website and newsletter editor, Stefan Gruenwedel, for integrating the brand; and thank Capital Graphics Inc. of Sacramento, a print company, for their help with managing the printing process. This is just the beginning. We have lots more planned!

###

Lavender Library, Archives
and Cultural Exchange
Sacramento, CA

Liberty and Justice for All

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

The Lambda Letters Project helps people write letters to elected officials on legislation that affects LGBTI people and people with HIV/AIDS. However, we also help people write on legislation of importance to people of color and women. We delivered over a quarter million letters last year.

People sometimes ask why we work on people of color issues and women's issues. There are three main reasons having to do with the arithmetic of politics, an understanding of history, and simple justice.

First, the arithmetic. There is currently just one lesbian in the state Senate. Every bill of importance to the LGBTI community has to be approved by 21 senators. There are four lesbian or gay members of the state Assembly. In the Assembly bills must be approved by at least 41 Assembly-members. There are currently 34 legislators of color in the Senate and Assembly. By coincidence, there are also 34 women legislators. People are always more willing to help you on your issues if you help them on their issues. Self-interest dictates that we help women legislators and legislators of color on the issues they care about.

Next, the history. According to the US Census Bureau, the percentage of white, non-Hispanic residents in California declined by 1.7 percent between 1990 and 2000. During that same time the percentage of Latinos increased by 42.6 percent, Asian Pacific Islanders went up by 35.2 percent, and the Native American percentage increased by 37.7 percent. White Californians are expected to become a

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters and Messages Collected

January, 2004	28,849 letters & e-mails
In all of 2003	258,495 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent

January, 2004	$4,522
In all of 2003	$51,398

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Mission Statement

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; and women by urging elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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Pat Washington, San Diego, pat.washington@lambdaletters.org
Carolyn Woodall, Sonora, carolyn.woodall@lambdaletters.org

Staff

Chief Lobbyist, E-mail Alert Advocate: Boyce Hinman,
(916)728-1261, boyce.hinman@lambdaletters.org
Newsletter/Website Editor: stefan.gruenwedel@lambdaletters.org
Legislative Analysts:

- LGBTI Issues: teri.ford@lambdaletters.org
- People of Color Issues: marty.martinez@lambdaletters.org
- HIV/AIDS Issues: jamie.shauvin@lambdaletters.org
- Women's Issues: adrienne.lauby@lambdaletters.org

General Coordinator: aeire.stickney@lambdaletters.org
Volunteer Coordinator: lori.norman@lambdaletters.org

Publication of the name of any person or organization in articles or advertising in the Lambda Letters Project newsletter is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such person or organization. The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly, except in December, by Lambda Letters Project Inc., 6529 Cowboy Way, Citrus Heights, CA 95621.

Send address changes to
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or e-mail *aeire.stickney@lambdaletters.org.*

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Don't Know Who Represents You?

Send your request with a stamped, self-addressed envelope and we'll send you a complete list of your elected officials. Or go to www.lambdaletters.org to find out who represents you.

Advertising Rates (per Issue)

Business-card sized ads (3½"×2") $10, quarter-page ads $30, third-page ads $33, half-page ads $45, full-page ads $75, full back-page ad $100. Deadline for payment and camera-ready copy, along with your name and phone number, is the 25th of each month.

☐ Yes, I want to make a donation to help LLP continue its important work.
(Appreciated but not required.)
☐ $10 ☐ $20 ☐ $30 ☐ other $_____

Discrimination Complaints

Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave?
If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684. In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212.
The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

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Women's Issue

Halt the Return of Back-Room Abortions

By Adrienne Lauby, LLP Analyst

Abortion became legal 31 years ago thanks to the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision. Women quickly organized to bring pregnant women out of murderous back rooms and into medical facilities, saving countless lives. Since then, our right to choose abortion has been systematically eroded by antichoice state legislators. In the last 10 years, various states have enacted more than 350 antichoice measures. These measures already make the right to choose an empty right for many women.

The Freedom of Choice Act—both S 2020 (Boxer, D–San Francisco) and HR 3719 (Nadler, D–NY)—will turn the principles guaranteed by Roe v. Wade into national law. It's planned as a fail-safe measure for Roe v. Wade and a remedy for women finding barriers to abortion in state laws. (Read more about it at *www.theorator.com/bills108/s2020.html*.)

This law means that a poor woman cannot be denied the use of Medicaid if she chooses to have an abortion. It means that abortions cannot be prohibited at public hospitals. It means that we respect a woman's ability to make her own decision and don't force them to attend antichoice propaganda lectures or submit to misleading information meant to discourage abortion. It means that military women overseas can afford safe abortions in a military hospital.

The Bush Administration, the Republican Caucus, and powerful antichoice organizations make no secret that their ultimate goal is to overturn Roe v. Wade. Support in the Supreme Court for Roe v. Wade hangs by a single vote. Without this law on the books, states can recriminalize abortion and menace doctors and patients with the threat of criminal investigation, prosecution, and imprisonment. We know that many state legislatures will not hesitate to start this immediately. For more facts about this situation, check out NARAL Pro-Choice America at *www.prochoiceamerica.org*.

Support the Freedom of Choice Act by sending a letter to your member of the House of Representatives urging support of HR 3719. ###

STUDIO (c)
crystal weber ▪ studio.c@sbcglobal.net
tel 916.448.6003 ▪ fax 916.446.6474
3181 d street ▪ sacramento, ca 95816

HIV/AIDS Issue

Support Sales of Hypodermic Needles, Syringes

By Jamie E. Shauvin, LLP Analyst

According to the Department of Health Services, California now spends over $315 million each year on services to people with HIV and AIDS. As of December 2002, there were 123,819 cumulative cases of HIV/AIDS reported in California since the outbreak of the epidemic.

The Department of Health Services also reports that just shy of 20 percent of all cases of HIV infection are related to the sharing of dirty needles by intravenous drug users. Reducing the sharing of dirty needles significantly could have a huge impact on the spread of HIV/AIDS and would probably do much to lower the state's cost of treating the disease.

Existing law requires pharmacists to keep detailed records of nonprescription sales of hypodermic needles and syringes. SB 1159 would eliminate that requirement. SB 1159 would also allow people working in needle exchange programs to possess up to 10 hypodermic needles and syringes at a time.

Introduced by State Senator John Vasconcellos (D–San Jose), SB 1159 could do much to slow the spread of serious blood-borne diseases. That, in turn, could greatly reduce the current projected health services costs to the state of caring for people with these diseases.

SB 1159 will be sent to the California Senate Health and Human Services Committee for review in the near future. Please write to the committee and urge them to approve SB 1159.

###

What happens when women put pen to paper... brush to canvas... lens to scene?

Sparks

spark — n. 1. A fiery particle resulting from friction. 2. A flash of light. 3. A trace or suggestion. 4. A vital, animating or activating force.

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LGBTI Issue

Protect Our Growing Right to Marry

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

The movement to grant the right to marry is gaining momentum. And yet two federal bills now pending in Congress could snuff that movement out before it really gets going. Both bills are proposed constitutional amendments. HJ Res. 56 has 112 cosponsors. It is in the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives. SJ Res. 26 has seven cosponsors. It is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

These bills would each add the following language to the US Constitution:

"Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution or the constitution of any State, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups."

The second sentence of that wording is especially dangerous. It could prevent state courts from ruling that a state constitution required the state to allow same-sex couples to marry. For example, the recent decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Court would probably be invalid if the above wording were added to the US Constitution. In fact, it is likely that the Supreme Court decision in Vermont would be invalid as well. That court decreed that same-sex couples must be given all the same rights as married people.

The amendment's wording would also probably prohibit a state from amending its constitution or passing a law allowing same-sex marriage. Probably whatever the state constitutional amendment or law said, it could not be "construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups."

It is therefore essential that we defeat these constitutional amendments. Our very own Senator Dianne Feinstein is a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. She is in a key position to defeat the Senate version of the bill in committee. Please write to her and urge her to do all in her power to make that happen. ###

People of Color Issue

Oppose 'Reforming' Healthcare for the Poor

By Marty Martinez, LLP Analyst

In January, Governor Schwarzenegger proposed substantial reforms to the Medi-Cal program as a way to reduce costs amidst California's budget crisis. The Medi-Cal program is important to the health of California's children and adults—especially people of color, who make up approximately 65 percent of Medi-Cal recipients. This is nearly 4 million of the over 6 million individuals on Medi-Cal.

The Medi-Cal program is already being hit with proposed cuts in the governor's budget. These additional reform measures may well result in cuts or other reductions in service for years to come, as the "reforms" could be more permanent in nature than any of the cuts currently on the table.

While the details remain unknown, the governor's proposed changes could severely undermine the health of communities of color by curtailing access and quality care in Medi-Cal. Proposed changes to the Medi-Cal program include aligning Medi-Cal eligibility standards with those in CalWORKS, using Medi-Cal rules for the aged, blind, and disabled, establishing a basic benefit package for adults, making optional benefits available for a higher cost, establishing premiums and copayments for "optional" benefits, and redefining the "medical necessity" standard for children's benefits.

The Department of Health Services (DHS) overseeing the reform process will be holding stakeholder meetings for the next few months. A waiver is being developed and will be submitted to the Legislature for review in May and then to the federal government in October. The purpose of the waiver is to seek permission to make changes that are out of compliance with current federal regulations and state laws.

Make your voice heard in this process to ensure that no harm is done to our communities in the name of reform. Write to the governor. Let him know that any reforms should avoid causing harm to people of color. ###

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שיר חדש

Rabbi Melanie Aron

Congregation Shir Hadash
20 Cherry Blossom Lane, Los Gatos, CA 95032-4637
(408) 358-1751 x4
E-mail: rabbiaron@shirhadash.org

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name

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March 15, 2004

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LAMBDA LETTERS PROJECT
2528 Madison Ave.
San Diego, CA 92116

LGBTI Issue

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The second sentence of that wording is especially dangerous. It could prevent state courts from ruling that a state constitution required the state to allow same-sex couples to marry. For example, the recent decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Court would probably be invalid if the above wording were added to the US Constitution. In fact, it is likely that the Supreme Court decision in Vermont would be invalid as well. That court decreed that same-sex couples must be given all the same rights as married people.

The amendment's wording would also probably prohibit a state from amending its constitution or passing a law allowing same-sex marriage. Probably whatever the state constitutional amendment or law said, it could not be "construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups."

It is therefore essential that we defeat these constitutional amendments. Our very own Senator Dianne Feinstein is a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. She is in a key position to defeat the Senate version of the bill in committee. Please write to her and urge her to do all in her power to make that happen. ###

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People of Color Issue

Oppose 'Reforming' Healthcare for the Poor

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March 15, 2004

The Hon. Deborah Ortiz
The California State Legislature
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Ortiz:

Please support Senate Bill 1159 when it comes before you in the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. This bill would authorize a licensed pharmacist to sell hypodermic needles or syringes to a person without a prescription under specified conditions.

According to the Department of Health Services, California now spends over $315 million a year on services to people with HIV and AIDS. As of December 2002, there were 123,819 cumulative cases of HIV/AIDS reported in California since the outbreak of the epidemic. The Department of Health Services also reports that just shy of 20% of all cases of HIV infection are related to the sharing of dirty needles by intravenous drug users. If we could reduce the sharing of dirty needles significantly, we could make a huge impact on the spread of HIV and AIDS. A reduction in sharing dirty needles would probably do much to lower the state's cost of treating the disease. One way to reduce the sharing of dirty needles is to improve access to clean hypodermic needles or syringes acquired through an authorized source. That's what SB 1159 would make possible.

SB 1159 could do a lot to slow the spread of serious blood-borne diseases. That, in turn, could greatly reduce the current projected health services costs to the state of caring for people with these diseases. These are goals you should really care about.

Please support SB 1159 when it comes before you in the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

Sincerely,

name

address

city, state, zip

March 15, 2004

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
The California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

I am writing to oppose substantial changes to the Medi-Cal program as a way to reduce costs amidst California's budget crisis. The Medi-Cal program is important to the health of California's children and adults, especially persons of color. Approximately 65% of Medi-Cal recipients are persons of color. This is nearly 4 million of the over 6 million individuals on Medi-Cal.

Medi-Cal is already being hit with proposed cuts in your new budget. The changes, or "reforms," you propose may well add to the problem by causing cuts or other reductions in service for years to come. The reforms could be more permanent in nature than any of the cuts you have currently proposed.

Some of your proposals include:

- Aligning Medi-Cal eligibility standards with those in CalWORKS
- Using Medi-Cal rules for the aged, blind and disabled
- Establishing a basic benefit package for adults
- Optional benefits will be available for a HIGHER cost
- Establishing premiums and co-payments for "optional" benefits
- Redefining the "medical necessity" standard for children's benefits

The importance of Medi-Cal in protecting the health of California's communities of color cannot be overstated. Therefore, I hope you will reconsider "reforming" Medi-Cal altogether.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

name

address

city, state, zip

March 15, 2004

The Hon. Dianne Feinstein
The United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Please oppose the proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, SJ Resolution 26. I understand that the bill is now in the Senate Judiciary Committee, a committee to which you belong. I urge you to do all in your power to assure that the bill never gets out of the committee.

Some people say a ban on same-sex marriage is needed to protect the "sanctity of marriage." The question arises, from whom should it be protected? My dictionary defines sanctity as "the quality of being holy or sacred." According to the US Census Bureau, there were 957,200 divorces in the United States just in the year 2000. Our nation's divorce rate is far above that of other nations. For example, divorce rates in Australia and Canada are just half the rate in our country. In Great Britain the rate is 62% of that in the United States. Hardly a day goes by that we don't hear of prominent people like Britney Spears getting married on a whim and divorcing just as easily. Where is the evidence that same-sex couples create a greater threat than this to the sanctity of marriage?

The Census Bureau reports there are almost 600,000 same-sex couples in the United States. Fully 16% of them are in your state, California. The census found there is little difference between these families and other families. Basically they are just trying to make a good home together. Many of them are raising children. Same-sex led families are, on average, probably no better, but certainly no worse, than families headed by opposite-sex couples

It is good public policy for the government to nurture families and the children they raise. The right to marry, along with the rights and duties associated with marriage, is the primary tool by which governments do this. Same-sex families need and deserve that support no less than other families. For all these reasons, I urge you to oppose SJ Res. 26 and any legislation to ban same-sex marriage.

Sincerely,

name

address

city, state, zip

March 15, 2004

The Hon. Robert Matsui
The US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Matsui:

As a supporter of a woman's reproductive rights, I am outraged by the continual erosion of a woman's right to choose. State legislatures and religious fundamentalists seem determined to return women to the back alleys of 30 years ago. With the Supreme Court only one vote away from overturning Rowe v. Wade, I'm writing to urge your support for The Freedom of Choice Act, HR 3719 (Nadler, D-NY).

Thirty-one years ago, after the Rowe v. Wade decision, US women gained the right to schedule safe, medical abortions instead of undergoing illegal, risky procedures at the hands of untrained practitioners. Poor women and women of color, their families and their friends, endured the greatest danger prior to the protection of abortion rights and have reaped the greatest benefit since.

Among other things, The Freedom of Choice Act would guarantee that poor women could not be denied the use of Medicaid if she chooses to have an abortion and that abortions could not be prohibited at public hospitals. It would give women the absolute right to choose whether to continue or terminate their pregnancies before fetal viability, and that right would be protected by law.

Anti-choice is anti-woman. It demonstrates a lack of respect for the intelligence and compassion of our nation's women. Please work with your colleagues to guarantee the swift passage of the Freedom of Choice Act.

Sincerely,

March Legislative Update

The deadline for introducing new bills passed on February 20. Under the Legislature's rules, no new legislation may be introduced after that date. However, there are exceptions to that rule. Resolutions to Congress, for example, can be introduced at any time, as can other forms of resolutions and petitions by the Legislature. Sometimes legislators get around the deadline by taking an old bill that was introduced before the deadline, completely gutting it, and inserting new language.

HIV/AIDS Issues

AB 1925 (Ray Haynes, R–Temecula)
Purpose: To require advance notice to parents, under certain circumstances, of sex or AIDS education to be given in a school and to notify parents that they can remove their children from this education by submitting a written request.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Watch with concern.

AB 1957 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To require the state to establish a website to display price comparisons of prescription drugs, including prices charged by licensed pharmacies in the state and Canadian pharmacies that provide mail-order service to the US that meet certification requirements established under the bill.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2125 (Lloyd Levine, D–Van Nuys)
Purpose: To require that a diagnosis be written on any prescription written by a doctor or on any prescription medicine container unless the patient asks that it not be added.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Watch with concern. This measure could help senior citizens who may forget what a medicine is intended for but it may cause problems for people with socially unacceptable diseases as well.

AJR 61 (Mark Ridley-Thomas, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To urge the Secretary of Health and Human Services to certify that permitting the importation of prescription drugs from Canada into the US poses no additional risk to the public's health and safety and, in fact, results in a significant reduction in the cost of prescription drugs to the American consumer.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1159 (John Vasconcellos, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To authorize a licensed pharmacist to sell hypodermic needles or syringes to a person without a prescription under specified conditions, and to authorize a person to possess up to 10 hypodermic needles or syringes if acquired through an authorized source.
Status: Referred to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee for a 3/10 vote.
LLP Position: Support. This would facilitate authorized clean-needle exchange programs around the state.

SB 1494 (John Vasconcellos, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To provide that a qualified person with a medical marijuana identification card, or any designated primary caregiver, may possess any amount of marijuana consistent with the medical needs of that qualified person with an identification card.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/ Transgender/Intersex Issues

AB 2208 (Christine Kehoe, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To require that domestic partners be treated equally to married couples by insurance companies with regard to benefits under all kinds of insurance policies.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2900 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To amend nondiscrimination language in California's labor and employment codes to make the language uniform. The nondiscrimination language found in the Fair Employment and Housing Act will be used as the model. Sexual orientation, gender identity, and language protecting women and other minorities will be amended into many of these government codes.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1918 (Cindy Montanez, D–Mission Hills)
Purpose: To allow a school employee, in a school district that is not subject to disability compensation laws, to take up to six weeks off with partial pay to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, parent, or domestic partner, or to bond with a new child.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1967 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses in California.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2044 (Bonnie Garcia, R–El Centro)
Purpose: To allow a credit for the amount paid or incurred by a taxpayer for long-term care or long-term care insurance for any family member of the taxpayer.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support if domestic partners are included in the definition of family.

AB 2320 (Patricia Bates, R–Laguna Niguel)
Purpose: To authorize any worker to opt out of making contributions to, and receiving benefits from, the family temporary disability insurance program. This program provides six weeks of disability payments to workers who stay home to care for seriously ill family members, including domestic partners.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Oppose. Allowing employees to opt out might bankrupt the program.

AJR 60 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To approve an Assembly Joint Resolution urging Congress and President Bush to support the Permanent Partners Immigration Act. This act, now being considered in Congress, would allow US citizens to obtain permanent legal US residency for their domestic partners who are citizens of another country.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support. Currently straight couples can obtain the same result by marriage.

SB 1193 (Nell Soto, D–Ontario)
Purpose: To require the state to pay a $10,000 death benefit to the surviving spouse of any member of the California National Guard, State Military Reserve, or Naval Militia who dies or is killed in the performance of their duty. This would also provide that the surviving spouse and children of the deceased member shall qualify for benefits under the National Guard Assumption Program of Loans for Education, and would exempt the spouse and children from paying tuition and fees at any public postsecondary educational institution in this state.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support if surviving domestic partners and their children are added.

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 5

SB 1234 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To enact a uniform definition of "hate crime" and direct all state and local agencies to use it exclusively; encourage all law-enforcement agencies to adopt a formal hate-crime protocol; direct law-enforcement agencies to deliver expanded hate crimes training to their officers; and increase penalties for hate crimes.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

People of Color Issues

AB 25 (Fabian Nunez, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require state agencies to accept as valid identification a foreign identification card issued by another nation, as defined, to its citizens or nationals, subject to specified exceptions. This would allow police officers to request additional ID if the officers thought the original ID might be a fake.
Status: Sent to the Senate floor for a final vote in that house. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 292 (Leland Yee, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To provide that a state or local governmental agency, or a public or private agency supported by state funding, shall not use any child, or permit any child to be used, as a translator or interpreter in any matter involving the business or function of that agency, except as specified. This would require each agency that receives state funding to have available for inspection an established procedure for providing competent translation services.
Status: Currently in Senate Appropriations Committee. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 858 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To prohibit public schools from using the word "Redskins" as a school or athletic team name, mascot, or nickname.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Referred to Senate Education Committee. No hearing date set yet **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1657 (Wilma Chan, D–Oakland)
Purpose: To prohibit the sale, offering for sale, distribution, or import into this state of any prepackaged gelatin-based (like Jell-O) alcoholic beverage unless it is sold, offered for sale, or intended to be sold in a business establishment (for consumption on the premises) that prohibits the presence of persons under 21 years of age on its premises.
Status: Currently in the Senate Governmental Organization Committee.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1796 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To provide that a convicted drug felon shall be eligible for aid under the Food Stamp Program.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Human Services Committee for a hearing in mid- to late March. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1815 (Wilma Chan, D–Oakland)
Purpose: To raise the income tax rate and the alternate minimum income tax rate on California's wealthiest citizens.
Status: Referred to Assembly Revenue and Tax Committee for a hearing on March 15.
LLP Position: Support. This would reduce the pressure to make cuts to vital HIV/AIDS programs and other health and social service programs.

AB 1845 (Alan Lowenthal, D–Long Beach)
Purpose: To require anyone contracting with the state to agree not to hire undocumented immigrants to do work covered by the contract or a subcontract. Author intends to change the purpose to say that contractors with the state may not use people in other countries to do work under contracts with the state of California.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Oppose in its current form.

AB 1895 (Joe Nation, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To require that an attorney who specializes in immigration law, or a certified immigration specialist, be provided to a dependent child of the court who is not a citizen of the US and who is deemed eligible for long-term foster care.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1920 (Doug La Malfa, R–Redding)
Purpose: To increase the penalties for someone who interferes with someone else's civil rights or who damages or destroys another person's property as a way of interfering with that other person's civil rights.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1963 (Simon Salinas, D–Salinas)
Purpose: To encourage the use of *promotores de salud* and community health workers to provide better health outcomes for rural and underserved communities, particularly agricultural workers, and seek to incorporate the use of *promotores de salud* and community health workers in the full range of state-funded health programs. (*Promotores de salud* are programs that utilize trained community members to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate outreach, education, and access to services.)
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2278 (Mervyn Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To declare that California's community colleges don't get enough financial support and that funding for community colleges should be based on full-time enrollment, while the amount of state funding for community colleges should be based on the national average of state financial support for community colleges.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2324 (Judy Chan, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To require many state programs to collect data regarding the race, ethnicity, national origin, and primary language of all participants. This would require the state to convene a task force to find ways that state agencies can help eliminate the underlying causes of racial and ethnic health disparities.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

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AB 2387 (Marco Firebaugh, D–South Gate)
Purpose: To implement the holding of Grutter v. Bollinger (2003) 539 US 306 and state that the narrowly tailored use of race in admissions decisions to further a compelling interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body is not an illegal preference prohibited by Section 31 of Article I of the California Constitution.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

ACR 172 (George Nakano, D–Torrance)
Purpose: To declare February 19, 2004, as a Day of Remembrance in order to increase public awareness of the events surrounding the internment of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor. **LLP Position:** Support.

AJR 54 (Robert Pacheco, R–City of Industry)
Purpose: To petition Congress to revise the formula used to calculate the federal Medicaid assistance percentage (FMAP) to consider, in addition to a state's per-capita income, the total number of persons living in poverty in that state.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee for a hearing in mid- to late March.
LLP Position: Support. This bill would provide more federal money for the Medi-Cal program and reduce the need for enrollment caps or budget cuts to the program.

AJR 62 (Ridley Thomas, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To ask Congress to repeal a law that prohibits the federal government from bargaining over drug prices for Medicare prescription drugs.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 17 (Martha Escutia, D–Norwalk)
Purpose: To amend the laws relating to property taxes on nonresidential commercial and industrial property to eliminate loopholes that have allowed such properties to evade reassessment upon sale of the property.
Status: Awaiting a final vote in the Assembly.
LLP Position: Support. This bill would increase tax revenues and reduce the need to cut spending on health and social services programs.

SB 921 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To declare the intent of the legislature to implement a single-payer, universal health-care delivery system in California.
Status: Currently in the Assembly Health Committee for a hearing in mid- to late March.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1144 (John Burton, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: The State Department of General Services buys prescription drugs for many state-funded health programs. This bill would allow it to buy them from, among others, Canadian manufacturers when that permits the department to pay less for the drugs.
Status: To the Senate Health and Human Services Committee for a vote tentatively on March 17. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1160 (Gilbert Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow undocumented immigrants, under certain circumstances, to obtain driver's licenses. Details of the bill wording are still being worked out.
Status: To the Senate Health and Human Services Committee for a vote tentatively on March 17. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1170 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To require the state to establish (on or before January 1, 2005) a list of maximum allowable costs that drug providers could charge the state for medicines used in the Medi-Cal program.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support. The list would keep costs down and reduce pressure to limit enrollment in Medi-Cal.

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SB 1188 (Wesley Chesbro, D-Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To provide grants to local governments that issue building permits for low-cost housing developments for farm workers.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1452 (Liz Figueroa, D–Fremont)
Purpose: To prohibit the state from contracting with any individual or entity that employs persons or subcontractors outside the US.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Oppose unless contracts for medicines are exempted. This might prevent the state from cutting costs by buying medicines from Canada. That, in turn, might hurt public health programs.

SB 1499 (Kevin Mirray, D–Culver City)
Purpose: To prohibit an employer from charging a fee for cashing an employee's payroll check, transporting an employee to a job site, or renting an employee the tools necessary to perform the duties of the employment.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1503 (Tom McClintock, R–Thousand Oaks)
Purpose: To overturn current law that allows certain undocumented young people to pay lower in-state tuition rates at the California Community Colleges and the California State University. Lambda Letters fought hard to gain passage of that current law two years ago.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Oppose.

SJR 21 (Joe Dunn, D–Garden Grove)
Purpose: To ask Congress to establish a fact-finding commission to determine if the federal government mistreated American citizens and permanent resident aliens of Mexican descent who were deported or coerced to emigrate during the 1930s and to recommend appropriate remedies.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

Women's Issues

AB 1813 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To provide increased penalties for people convicted of committing domestic violence in the presence of a child.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Public Safety Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

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Legislative Update

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AB 1825 (Sarah Reyes, D–Fresno)
Purpose: To require larger employers to post information about the laws against, and the remedies for, sexual harassment and to train supervisors on the subject.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2010 (Loni Hancock, D–Berkeley)
Purpose: To allow Alameda County to increase fees, up to a maximum increase of $2, for certified copies of marriage certificates, birth certificates, fetal death records, and death records, for the purposes of providing funding for governmental oversight and for the coordination of domestic violence prevention, intervention, and prosecution efforts in the county.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2018 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To provide that, in a divorce case in which one party has been convicted of criminal domestic violence in the last five years, the other party has a rebuttable presumption of entitlement to 100 percent of the community property.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2148 (Manny Diaz, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To allow a court to require parties to a child custody, visitation, and child-support proceedings to pay attorney's fees and court costs. This would allow the court to order one party to pay the other party's costs when the other party cannot afford them; would allow the court to issue a temporary order on child custody, visitation, and child support while the case is being litigated; and would allow the court to order spousal support, if the parties are married, during litigation of a domestic abuse case.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2291 (Ray Haynes, R–Temecula)
Purpose: To prohibit the funding of an abortion under the Medi-Cal program unless the physician performing the abortion has obtained written assurance from the patient that she understands that she may not be coerced into having an abortion. The bill would prohibit the reimbursement of a provider for abortion services unless the provider submits a statement signed by the recipient of the Medi-Cal benefits that includes a statement that it is against the law for anyone to force, intimidate, or coerce the recipient into having an abortion.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Oppose.

AB 2317 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Carson)
Purpose: To increase the penalty for employers who pay women less for doing the same work as men.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AJR 53 (Sarah Reyes, D–Fresno)
Purpose: To petition Congress to reinstate the breast cancer research stamp program. Part of the proceeds of the sale of these postage stamps supports breast cancer research.
Status: Dropped by the author. Congress authorized renewal of the stamp.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 57 (Hanna-Beth Jackson, D–Santa Barbara)
Purpose: To petition Congress to stand firm in their resolve to uphold the intent and substance of the US Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade relating to reproductive rights, and to encourage all Americans to participate in the national celebration, "The March for Women's Lives," in recognition of that decision's historic importance in promoting women's rights.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Not assigned to a Senate committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

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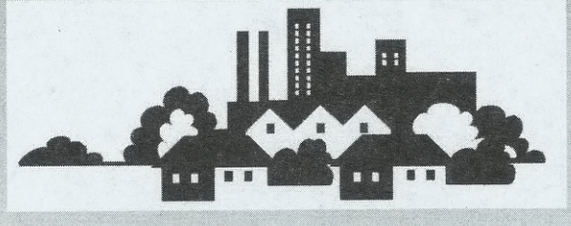
SB 1441 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To provide that a victim of domestic violence or abuse has the right to have a domestic violence counselor and a support person of his or her choosing present at any interview by law enforcement authorities, district attorneys, or defense attorneys.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support.

###

Liberty and Justice for All
Continued from page 1

smaller and smaller part of California's future population. If the LGBTI community goes to bat for other minorities, this will build trust and support for us among the communities who are destined to dominate California's future.

Finally, beyond all this self-interest is the simple fact that the people of color issues and women's issues supported by the Lambda Letters Project are issues of simple justice. As such, they deserve and demand the support of all right-minded people. That's why good people pledge their allegiance to a nation that promises liberty and justice for all.



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